

# ***FTC Consumer Alert***

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Division of Consumer & Business Education

## **How to Recognize and Report 2010 Census Scams**

The U.S. Census Bureau is gearing up for the 2010 Census, and so, say fraud fighters, are scam artists. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, says scammers may pose as census takers to get people's personal information — and then use it to commit identity theft and other frauds.

### **How the Census Works**

To help you guard against potential “census scams,” the FTC wants you to know how the Census is administered and the questions it asks.

First, the Census is administered **only** through the mail and in person. Census forms will be mailed to every residence in the U.S. beginning in March 2010, with a postage-paid return envelope. The Census Bureau does **not** conduct the Census by email or online.

Second, the census form has 10 questions. The form asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship, whether you own or rent your home, who is in the home at the time you are completing the form, and your phone number. It does **not** ask for your Social Security number, PIN codes, passwords, or similar access information for credit cards, banks or other financial accounts. For the full list of questions on the 2010 Census, visit **2010.census.gov**.

Once you complete the form, send it back in the postage-paid envelope. If you don't return the form, a census taker will visit you between April and July 2010. If you aren't home or can't come to the door, the census taker will return up to three times, each time leaving a door hanger with a phone number so you can call to schedule a visit.

Census takers must show you an ID badge that has their name, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. If you ask, census takers also will give you information so you can verify their identity with their supervisor or the Local Census Office.

Census takers do not ask to come into your home, and will ask you **only** the questions on the census form.

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## **Recognizing and Reporting Possible Census Fraud**

If you get an email or visit a website that could be misrepresenting the Census Bureau or the 2010 Census:

- don't reply or click on any links within the email
- don't open any attachments because they may contain a virus that could infect your computer
- report it to the FTC at **ftc.gov** or call 1-877-FTC-HELP
- forward the email or website URL to the Census Bureau at **ITSO.Fraud.Reporting@census.gov**; then delete the message

The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit **ftc.gov** or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. Watch a new video, *How to File a Complaint*, at **ftc.gov/video** to learn more.

The FTC enters consumer complaints into the Consumer Sentinel Network, a secure online database and investigative tool used by hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION	ftc.gov
1-877-FTC-HELP	FOR THE CONSUMER

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